

Message Text

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BERN BONN NAIROBI PARIS CAIRO
FROM TEL AVIV DTD 04 JUL 1976 QTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: RESCUE FROM UGANDA

1. MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL EVRON CALLED DCM EARLY JULY 4 (AMBASSADOR WAS EN TOUTE TO DEDICATION OF BICENTENNIAL NATIONAL PARK) AND GAVE FOLLOWING FIRST DETAILS OF LAST NIGHT'S DRAMATIC RESCUE OPERATION BY IDF FORCES AT ENTEBBE AIRPORT. HE SAID AMBASSADORS OF SEVERAL "FRIENDLY COUNTRIES" WERE BEING CALLED IN THIS MORNING TO BE GIVEN THESE DETAILS.

2. EVRON BEGAN BY SAYING THAT, WHILE HE KNEW WE WERE WELL AWARE OF WHAT HAD BEEN GOING ON, HE WANTED TO EXPLAIN WHY THE GOI FELT IT HAD HAD TO OPERATE AS IT DID. FIRST, THEY HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT WAS PROBABLY GOING TO BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE HIJACKERS. SECOND, THEY HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A "PROPER ESTIMATE" OF THE FRENCH INTERLOCUTORY ROLE. THIRD, THERE WAS THE OBVIOUS FACT THAT AMIN WAS WORKING HAND-IN-GLOVE WITH THE HIJACKERS. FOURTH, DEMANDS WERE BEING MADE UPON ISRAEL TO PRESSURE OTHER COUNTRIES TO RE-
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LEASE PRISONERS THEY WERE HOLDING, ALTHOUGH ONLY ISRAELIS WERE

BEING HELD HOSTAGE (OVERLOOKING, OF COURSE, THE AIR CREW). FIFTH, IF ISRAEL HAD GIVEN IN TO THE HIJACKERS DEMANDS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ANOTHER BLOW AGAINST INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, AND A REWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL BLACKMAIL.

3. GIVEN THESE CIECUMSTANCES, ISRAEL HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT HAD TO ACT. THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO INTERFERE WITH OR HARM THE INTERESTS OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY, EVRON STRESSED. THE ONLY OBJECTIVE OF THE ISRAELI TASK FORCE WAS TO SECURE THE SAFETY OF ISRAELI CITIZENS. THE AIR CREW HAD BEEN OFFERED THE OPTION OF DEPARTING WITH THE ISRAELI TASK FORCE OR OF STAYING IN UGANDA. THEY CHOSE TO DEPART.

4. EVRON SAID THAT TWO OF THE HOSTAGES WERE KILLED DURING THE FIGHT AND THERE WERE SEVERAL CASUALTIES AMONG THE ISRAELI TASK FORCE. NO PRISONERS WERE TAKEN AND HE BELIEVED THAT ALL THE HIJACKERS HAD BEEN KILLED. THERE WERE ALSO SOME UGANDAN CASUALTIES. IN ALL, HE THOUGHT THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES WERE VERY FEW CONSIDERING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ENTIRE OPERATION.

5. PRIME MINISTER RABIN WILL ADDRESS A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE KNESSET THIS AFTERNOON. THE MESSAGE HE RECEIVED FROM PRESIDENT FORD DURING THE NIGHT WILL BE RELEASED AT 2 P.M. LOCAL TIME WHEN RABIN IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN SPEAKING.

6. DCM ASKED ABOUT KENYAN COOPERATION. EVRON DUCKED THIS BY SAYING THAT HE HOPED TO GET TO US LATER ON THIS SUBJECT. AS WE COULD IMAGINE, HE ADDED, THE LESS SAID ABOUT THIS THE BETTER.

7. COMMENT. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS ALL THE MANY RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS OPERATION, IT IS LIKELY TO BOOST THE DOMESTIC STANDING OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT. THE RESCUE OPERATION IS PROBABLY THE GREATEST FILLIP TO ISRAELI MORALE SINCE THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. TOON UNQTE ROBINSON

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